

JOHN JACKSON—HEIRS OF.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 320.]

JUNE 14, 1850.

Mr. WALDO, from the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, made the following

REPORT:

*The Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, to whom was referred the memorial of the legal representatives of John Jackson, deceased, respectfully report:*

That, from the documents submitted to the committee in this case, it appears that while Captain John Paul Jones was cruising off the Spurn on the coast of England, in the American ship-of-war Bon Homme Richard, on the 22d day of September, 1779, John Jackson, a British pilot, came on board his ship, mistaking it for a British ship-of-war; that Captain Jones requiring the assistance of a pilot while near the banks on that coast, detained him on board his ship, and he was there employed as the pilot of said ship in the action that took place between the same and the Serapis, in which action the said John Jackson lost an arm. In consideration of the services of said Jackson and his severe misfortune, Captain Jones paid him one hundred ducats, and gave him a written promise in behalf of the United States that he should receive half pay as a pilot the remainder of his life, to commence from the date of said writing, and payable every six months by the American ambassador at the court of France, upon proper proof of identity. It does not appear that this engagement of Captain Jones, in behalf of the United States, has ever been performed. The attention of the old Congress was called to this subject by a letter from the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, dated September 20, 1785, and it underwent the examination of a committee, who subsequently made the following report:

*“The committee to whom was referred a letter from the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the 20th September, 1785, with its enclosures, beg leave to report:*

*“That it appears to your committee that while Captain J. P. Jones was hovering on the coast of England in the year 1779, John Jackson, a British pilot, came on board him, supposing him to be British; that Captain Jones found it convenient to detain him as a pilot, and in the action with the Serapis which ensued, this man lost an arm. It further appears to your committee, from a letter of Captain Jones, that the second*

lieutenant of the Bon Homme Richard was, with twenty others, at the time of the battle with the Serapis, on board Jackson's pilot boat, and that when Captain Jones found it impossible to prevent the Bon Homme Richard from sinking, Jackson's pilot boat was of singular service in saving the men, particularly the wounded, some of whom, Captain Jones is persuaded, would have been drowned had not he have been furnished with the means of saving them.

"It also appears to your committee that Captain Jones gave this unfortunate man one hundred ducats in hand, and promised him the half pay of a pilot for the remainder of his life. Whereupon your committee submit to Congress the following resolution:

*"Resolved*, That six dollars per month, a pilot's half pay, be allowed and paid out of the treasury of the United States, in half-yearly payments, to John Jackson, of the town of Kingston-upon Hull, in England, who lost an arm on board the Bon Homme Richard, commanded by Captain J. P. Jones, in the action with the Serapis on the 22d day of September, 1779; that said half-pay commence from the 15th day of November, 1779, and continue during the tenure of the natural life of said Jackson; and that the board of treasury take order for making the aforesaid half-yearly payment on a certificate from two or more magistrates, expressing the place where the said John Jackson may be then living, and that he is really the same person in whose favor this grant is made."

Which said report is endorsed as follows, to wit:

"Report on the case of John Jackson, a British pilot, taken by J. P. Jones. Entered. Read 28th September, 1785."

"No. 9. Messrs. Howell, Long, Kean."

It does not appear that any further action was ever had upon this report.

It further appears to the committee that the said John Jackson died in the year 1815; that he had three children—one son and two daughters; that his son, James Jackson, came to this country after the decease of his father to prosecute this claim, and deceased before he had found the evidence before mentioned; that he left one son and only heir, who is now a resident at the navy-yard in the city of Washington; that the said James, in his life-time, claimed to have purchased the right of his two sisters in this demand, and was the sole owner thereof.

This petition was presented to the last Congress and referred to the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, which committee made a favorable report on the 8th day of August, 1848, accompanied by a bill for the relief of the heirs of said John Jackson, but which was not reached in the order of business, and was not acted on by the House. As this claim has heretofore received the favorable consideration of the committees who have had the same in charge, and commends itself to the judgment of this committee, they herewith present a bill for the relief of the petitioners, and recommend its passage.